



A CRITICAL REVIEW ON RAKTA AS CHATURTHA DOSHA OR DHATU

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ABSTRACT:

Rakta-one amongst the seven *dhatu*s. *Acharya Sushruta* says, it is extremely important for sustenance of life- '*Raktam Jeeva Iti Sthithi*'. The classical texts of *Ayurveda* have given, the concept of '*Tristhuna*' (three pillars) of *deha* (body) which supports the house or body and it became abnormal it causes destruction of body. Amongst them, *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala* are the three basic constituents of human body. Amongst those *saptadhatu*, *Rakta* is the second one. *Acharya* also mentioned that along with three *Doshas Shonita*, the 4th *Dosha* present even during the origin, existence & destruction of the body. By this literary study a conclusion is drawn that, *Rakta* is primarily a *Dhatu* and it has been given the noun (sadhya) '*Dosha*' because of its importance similar to *doshas* in the body.

Keywords: *Rakta*, *Chaturtha dosha*, *Tristhuna*, *Tridosha*

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INTRODUCTION

The word '*Rakta*' is derived from Sanskrit root '*ranj*', meaning—to dye or color, to affect or move, to excite/glad/charm/delight^[1]. If white cloth is stained with this it become red colored hence it is called as *Rakta*. Synonyms of *Rakta* are *Shonita*, *Rudhira*, *Lohita*, *Asrik/Asra*, *Kshataja* ^[2].

Shonita: The term is derived from '*shona*' meaning red color. The term is also applied to denote the female genetic prototype ^[3].

Rudhira: The term is derived from root '*rudh*' meaning to stop or hold. The blood tissue sustains the life of human beings, hence it is called '*rudhira*'^[4].

Lohita: The term indicates the coppery red color of blood ^[5].

Asrik/Asra: The term is derived from Sanskrit root '*ashukshepane, srijvisarge*'. It means to get ejected or expelled out. This synonym is used in the context of excessive bleeding. E.g., menorrhagia(*asrigdara*), bleeding disorders(*asrapitta/raktapitta*)

Kshataja: It means that which originates from trauma (*kshata*) or wound/ulcer (*vrana*).

Metabolism of rakta

The *rakta dhatu* is formed from its predecessor *rasa dhatu*. The nourishing portion of *rasa dhatu* and constituents of nutrient fluid (*ahara rasa*) are transformed into *rakta dhatu* by action of ranjakapitta (type

of *pitta* responsible for color pigments) ^[6].

This process takes place in liver and spleen ^[7].

The pure *rakta* is formed as per the suitable conditions at the place of living, season, and adaptation ^[8].

In the metabolism of *Rakta*, *pitta* is produced in the form of *Mala* (excreted part) which is known as *Vaikruta Dosha & Updhatu* (Secondary tissue) are produced called as *Kandara* (tendon) & *Sira* (blood vessels). All the entities of this universe are composed of *Panchamahabhuta*, however *Rakta* is *Tej & Jala* predominant in nature ^[9].

Properties of rakta

Rakta in pure or wholesome status looks like heated gold which turns red after putting in fire; insect (*Indragopa*) red lotus or like *Abrus Precatorius* (*Gunja*). These various shades depend upon individuals. *Acharya Sushruta* also described characteristics of pure *Rakta*. *Rakta* looks like insect (*Indragopa*), is of proper density & does not bear any other color than meant of pure *Rakta* is neither very cool nor very warm. It is sweet; unctuous, red in color, heavy, smells typically. Reacts to items which affect the *pitta*^[10].

Functional & physiological measure of rakta

As it is one of the seven *Dhatu*, its prime function is to sustenance & nourishment of the body. It brings the luster to color of skin & nourishes the *Mamsadhatu* (Muscle). It also

keeps the individuals alive. It is also responsible for the sensation of touch. Circulating blood function for nourishing the *Dhatvah*. The person with pure *rakta* has glowing complexion, well-functioning sense organs, and a cheerful state of mind. His digestion and natural urges are normal. He is endowed with happiness, satiety, and strength^[11]. Physiological measures of the *Rakta* is 8 *Anjali*^[12]. *Rakta dhatu* is formed in a time span of 6030 *kala* (ten days)^[13].

DISCUSSION

Why *Rakta* Should not be Considered as a *Chaturtha Dosha*?

1. *Chakrapanidutta* commented in *teeka*- he initially said that, *Acharya Charaka* had included *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* in the *Dosha Samgraha*, but had not included *Rakta* in it^[14].
2. *Dosha* can independently vitiate others and aggravated *Vatadi Dosha* do not expect others for their own vitiation. *Dushya* expects others for their vitiation to become able to vitiate others. *Shonita*, expects *Doshas* for its vitiation and then become able to vitiate others. It never gets vitiated without these *Doshas*, so *Doshas* are the causatives factors of *Shonita Dushti*. Hence, *Shonita* is a *Dushya*. Even if it aggravates in its own quantity, it cannot vitiate others unless it is vitiated by aggravated *Vata*, *Pitta* and/or *Kapha*.
3. *Dushti Hetu*, *Laxanas* and *Vikaras*- Etiological factors causing *Rakta Dushti*

(vitiating) are actually the factors which vitiate *Doshas*, and these vitiated *Doshas* entering the *Rakta Dhatu* produce *Laxanas* (symptoms) according to vitiated *Dosha* in the locations of *Rakta Dhatu* (location). Thus they are termed as *Raktaja Vikaras*. Always *Vatadi Dosha* are etiological factors for the *Rakta Dushti* and because of the location of *Dosha Dushti* symptoms in *Rakta*, *Raktaja Vikaras* are explained^[15].

4. *Chikitsa* (treatment)- Treatment of these *Raktaja vikaras* are also with reference to the vitiated *Dosha* in the *Rakta* and not actual treatment of *Rakta*^[16].

5. *Sneha Dagdha* - When burns occurs due to hot liquids like *Ghruta* etc, it is not the *Ghruta* causing the burn, it is the heat or temperature of that *Ghruta* which causes burn. Similarly, *Rakta* causing diseases and producing symptoms doesn't mean *Rakta* itself is doing so. It is the *Dosha Dushti* present in *Rakta* causing everything.

6. As in formation of *Rakta* it under goes *Uttarottara Dhatu* formation as per *Kshiradadhi Nyaya*, Hence *Rakta* is formed only after formation of *Rasa Dhatu* and in the *Dosha* formation they are individually present in the body they are not depended on each other.

7. In the types of *Prakruti* there is explanation regarding,

1. *Vataja Prakruti*

2. *Pittaja Prakruti*

3. *Kaphaja Prakruti*

But there is no reference about *Raktaja Prakruti*^[17].

8. In all classics, among *Sara Purusha Lakshanas*, there is explanation regarding *Rakta Sara Purusha Lakshanas*, but there is no reference about *Vata, Pitta, Kapha Sara Purusha Lakshanas*.

9. All *Doshas* are explained with their sub-types, But there is no reference about sub-types of *Rakta*^[18].

Dosha and their Types

VATA- *Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana, Samana*

PITTA- *Pachaka, Ranjaka, Sadhaka, Alochaka, Bhrajaka*

KAPHA- *Avalambaka, Kledaka, Bodhaka, Tarpaka, Slesaka*

10. *Ashraya Ashrayi Bhava Sharirika Doshas* work through the *Dhatu* and *Mala*. *Dhatu* & *Malas* are the medium and structural units whereas *Doshas* are in their energetic form^[19].

Ashrayee (Dosha) and Ashraya (Dhatu & Mala)

Vata-Asthi

Pitta-Sweda and *Rakta*

Kapha Rasa, Mamsa, Meda, Majja, Shukra, Purisha & Mutra

So, here also *Rakta* is included under the *Ashraya* not under the *Ashrayee*.

11. *Vata, Pitta, Kapha Doshas* have their respective *Nanatmaja Vyadhis*, But *Rakta* does

not have *Nanatmaja Vyadhis*, instead few *Rakta Pradoshaja Vikaras* has been explained.

Why rakta should be considered as a chaturtha dosha?

1. *Rakta* Included as *Dosha*:

Vata, Pitta & Kapha are the cause for the origin of body and they are situated respectively in the lower, middle & upper parts of the body. The body in the same way like a house supported on three pillars (*Tristhuna*) and when they are vitiated they causes destruction of body^[20]. These three along with *Shonita*, the 4th *dosha* present even during the origin, existence & destruction of the body^[21]

2. There will be no existence of the body without: *Kapha, Pitta, Vata* and even *Shonita*, the body is always supported by these factors^[22].

3. *Dosha prasara*:

While describing *Shatkriya Kalas*, in the stage of *Prasara Avastha* of *Dosha*, *Susruta* explained that *Doshas* spread either individually or in combination with 2 or 3 *Doshas* or with combination of *Shonita*, hence there are 15 types of *Prasara*, so, here *Shonita* is given equal importance along with other three *Doshas*^[23].

4. *Rakta* is the cause of *saririka vyadhi*:

Sharirika Vyadhi are those caused by foods and drinks which bring about abnormalities in *Vata, Pitta, Kapha* and *Rakta*, either

individually or combined. By this we can understand as *Rakta* is *moola* of *Sharira* also it is *moola* of *Sharirika Vyadhis* like other *Doshas*^[24].

5. *Rakta* is the cause of *saririka vrana*:

As in *Shalya Tantra*, *Vrana Chikitsa* is most important aspect in the formation *sharirika vrana* along with three *Doshas* *Rakta* is also explained, so this shows the importance of *Rakta* in body^[25].

6. Disease classification:

While classifying diseases, many of the surgical diseases are classified as, *Vataja*, *Pittaja*, *Kaphaja*, and *Raktaja*. E.g, *Vrana Shopha*, *Gulma*, *Pleeha Roga* etc^[26].

7. Development of eye:

Eye is one among the most important part of the body and there is a role of *Rakta* in its development of the eye along with other three *Doshas*^[27].

Dosha and Colour of eye

Rakta- Rakta Varna / brown coloured

Pitta- Pitta Varna

Sleshma- Sukla Varna

Vata- Vikrutakshya / abnormal eyes

8. In the formation of *Vrana Shopha Lakshanas*: there is an individual role of all *Doshas* to form an individual *Lakshana* of *Vrana Shopha*, along with *Rakta*, like.

Dosha and Special features

Vata-Shula

Pitta-Paka

Kapha-Puya

Rakta-Paka

9. *Shodhana Chikitsa*^[28].

Dosha and Samshodhana

Vata-Basti

Pitta-Virechana

Kapha-Vamana

Urdhvajatrugata Vikaras-Nasya

Rakta-Raktamokshana

When *Doshas* are aggravated in such a condition that it is difficult to subside them by *Shamana Chikitsa* then *Shodhana Chikitsas* are adopted, so individual three *Doshas* have their specific *Shodhana* procedure, *Raktamokshana* is also told specific *Chikitsa* for vitiated *Rakta* and as Per *Acharya Sushruta Rakta Mokshana* is one among the *Panchakarma* and considered as *Ardha Chikitsa*.

CONCLUSION

By above all discussion points, it is very difficult to reach to one conclusion that *Rakta* can be accepted or rejected as *Chaturtha Dosha*.

- *Rakta* is not a *dosha* but due to similarities in the method of explaining *Rakta nirukti*, *sthana*, *guna*, *karma*, *vikara* and *chikitsa* it can be considered as a *Dosha*.
- By above mentioned points we can say that *Rakta* is a *dhatu* only but it has independent pathogenesis in the initiation of diseases as *dosha* like in

vrana, vidradhi, rakta pitta, gulma
etc.

- But ultimately it can be concluded that *Rakta* cannot be considered as *Chaturtha Dosha* but it is most important *dhatu* in the body especially in preview of *Shalya Tantra*.

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